

“thinking together” – Strengthening Diversity- Sensitive Competencies

*Diversity-Sensitive Competencies of Prospective Teachers through Critical
Reflectivity in Multiprofessional Teams*

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Little Journey through a teaching project «thinking together»

1. Context, background and theoretical frame
2. project, structure, goals & experiences
3. Outcome & outlook

Professionalization through Diversity-Sensitive and Anti-Discriminatory Competences

Challenge

- Students feel insufficiently prepared to work with newly immigrated and refugee children/youth (Massumi & Fereidooni, 2016, 2017).

Motivation

- Experiences from the mentoring program ACCOMPAGNA confirm this need.
- The «thinking:together" project addresses this gap.

*"Sensitization to diversity, educational disadvantage in general, and migration in particular should be a fixed component of curricula."
(Massumi et al., 2022, p. 234–235)*



Reflective Competences and Critical Reflectivity

Reflective Competences

- Central pillar of teacher professionalization
- Structured, professionally guided reflection (Peter & Hecht, 2022)

Reflectivity vs. Reflection

- **Reflection:** Process of engaging with professional situations (past and future-oriented).
- **Reflectivity:** Attitude behind reflection—a key competency for professional action (Leonhard & Rihm, 2011).

Flight Migration as a Field for Power-Critical Reflectivity

Hybrid, cross-border teaching project (University of Teacher Education in Switzerland and Austria)

Flight Migration

- Result of complex societal power and violence processes (Worm, 2019)
- Transferable to other diversity topics (e.g., anti-racism, gender diversity)

Interdisciplinarity

 (Boix Mansilla, 2010)

- Combining knowledge from different disciplines
- Extends beyond traditional subject teaching

Goals and Vision

Vision

All students with refugee backgrounds experience appreciative, critically reflective, and diversity-sensitive teachers.



Goals

Enable students to critically reflect on experiences and attitudes.

Connect academic, personal, and political perspectives.

Cross-border teaching Project: Structure and Contents

University of Teacher Education in Switzerland and Austria

Part 1: Winter School (February 2025)

In-person events with experts on:

- Refugees and Education (Bettina Looser)
- Multilingualism in the context of flightmigration (Sara Hägi-Mead)
- Social Work in School (Maurice Kumar)
- Critical Race in Teacher Education (Mona Massumi)
- Trauma & Empowerment (Birsen Kahraman)

Part 2: Digital Self Learning Spaces

- Articles, studies, videos, exercises for deepening knowledge.

Equal Importance of Topics

Intersectional and perspectives and based on an critical diversity approach

Teaching Project: Structure and Contents

Part 3: Process-Oriented Reflection Meetings:

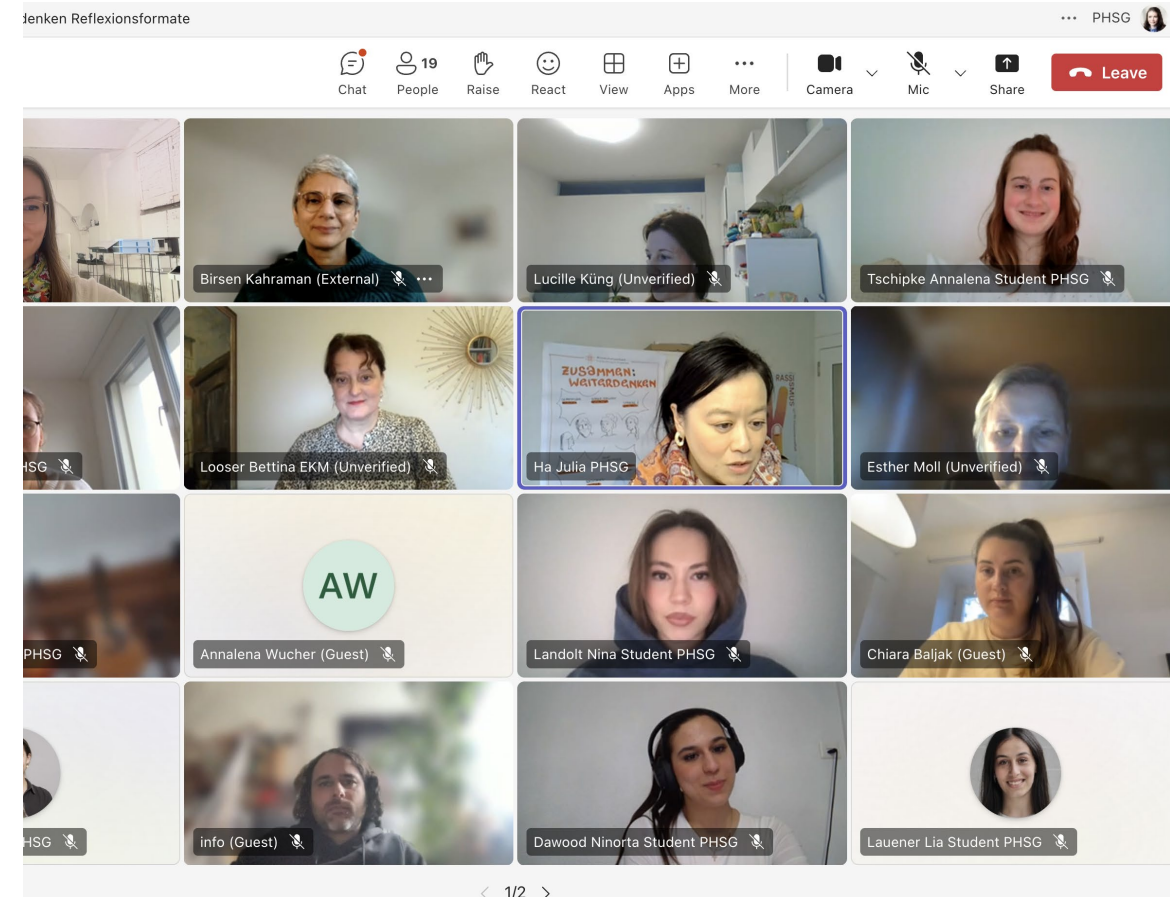
Multiprofessional Reflection Spaces (4 Sessions between March and May 2025)

Methods:

- Supervision, Intervision, Peer Coaching

Goals

- Creating brave and safe spaces
- Exchange of experiences among students
- Engagement with professional self-image
- Development of diversity and power sensitive attitudes
- Linking theoretical knowledge and pedagogical practice



Self Assessment and Evaluation: Development of Knowledge in the Thematic Fields



Participants:

- 9 students (Secondary I, University of Teacher Education St. Gallen, CH)
- 7 students (Primary, University of Teacher Education St. Gallen, CH)
- 5 students (Primary, University of Teacher Education Vorarlberg, AT)

Experts:

- 6 Experts

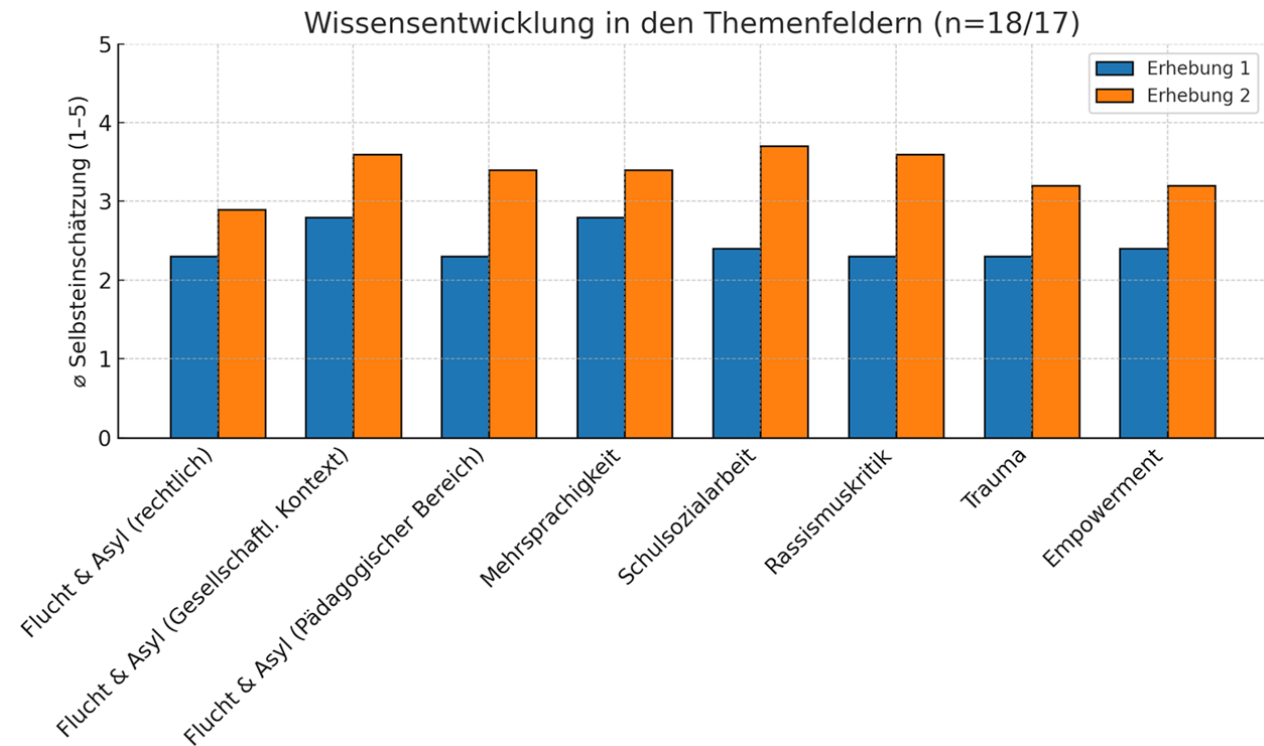
Project Team:

- 3 Lecturer and reasearcher

Data Collection and Evaluation

Methods

- Self-Assessment before (blue bar) after (orange bar) Winter School.
- Journaling as a basis for performance records (creative formats: video clips, poems, poetry slam).
- Final Survey on relevance, consistency, practicality, and effectiveness.
- Focus Group Discussions with students and experts.



"The in-person event was well-structured, and the selection of speakers covered a wide range of aspects. The shared personal experiences were particularly memorable."

Self Assessment and Evaluation: Development of Knowledge in the Thematic Fields

Self-Assessment Results

- Increase in all competency areas after Winter School

Topics:

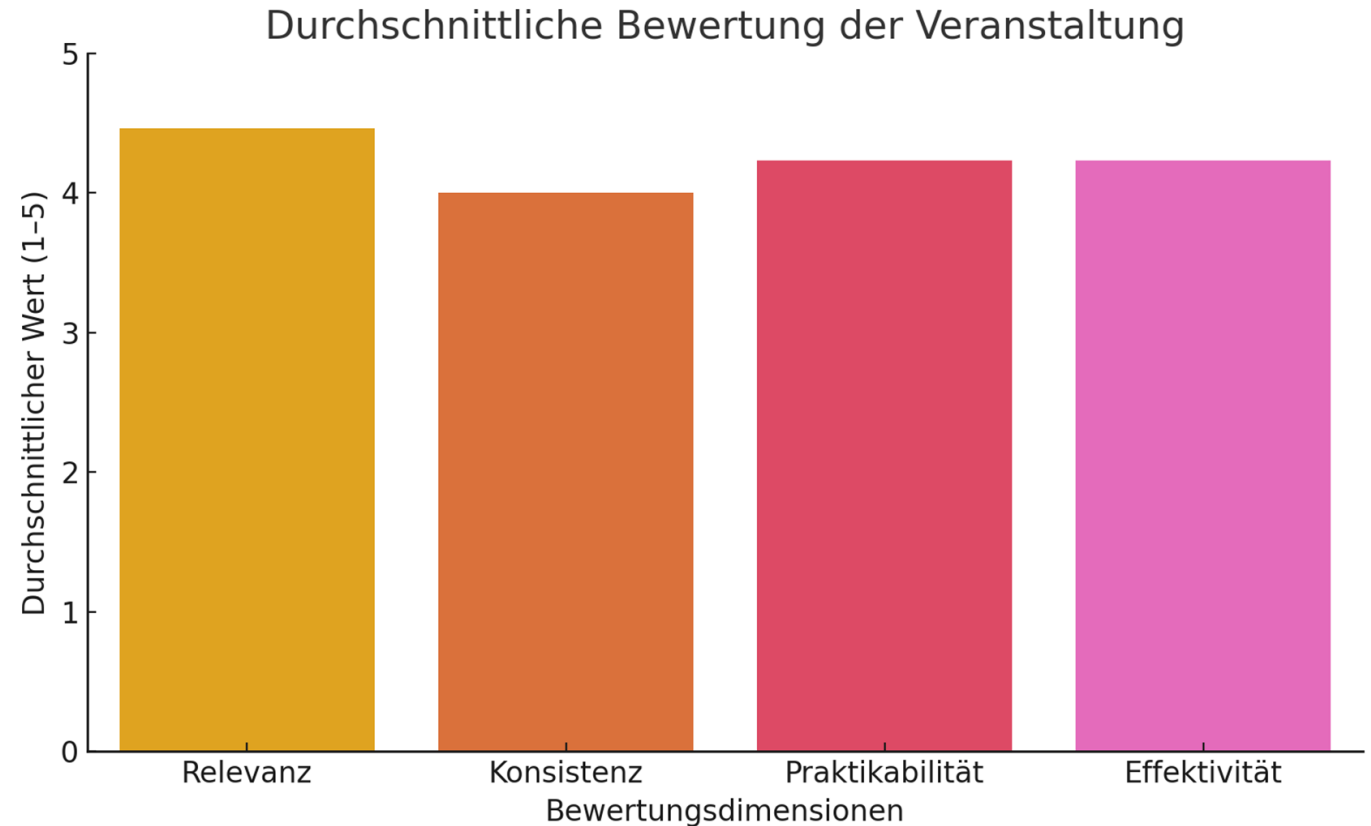
- Refugees and Education,
- Multilingualism in context of flight migration,
- School Social Work,
- Critical Race in Teacher Education
- Trauma & Empowerment



Results of the Final Survey

Example Items

- Relevance: "The content was relevant for my studies/professional practice."
- Consistency: "The event was logically structured and well-organized."
- Practicality: "I can apply the content in my practical work."
- Effectiveness: "The event expanded my competencies."



Results of the Group Discussion

Group Discussion:

- Dialog und Kooperation
- Reflection

- Reflection sessions were perceived as enriching, especially due to the exchange and the opportunity to reflect on one's own actions.
- Small group work: seen as important for intensive exchange and reflection.
- Combination of lectures and discussions—diverse and valuable.
- Short, regular sessions are evaluated positively as they prevent overwhelm and enable sustainable work.
- Practical relevance is important: practice-oriented approaches and concrete recommendations for action.

Results of the Group Discussion

"I was able to greatly expand my competencies, so now I somehow feel like I've developed a third ear for language sensitivity—yes, for sensitive language in general." (S5, F1, Paragraph 41)

Successes

- Increase in diversity-sensitive competencies among students.
- Interdisciplinary approach and multiprofessional collaboration as success factors.

Outlook

- Sensitivity on University didactics (creating safe and brave spaces, feedback, power relations)
- Anchoring insights in teacher education and school development (critical diversity literacy).
- Transferability to other contexts (e.g., other countries, school types).

Mansilla, V. B. (2010). Learning to synthesize: The development of interdisciplinary understanding. na.

Massumi, M./Verlinden, K./Berninger, I. (2022): Professionalisierung von Lehramtsstudierenden im Kontext aktueller Migration – Die Entwicklung von Einstellungen gegenüber geflüchteten und neu zugewanderten Kindern und Jugendlichen. In: heiEDUCATION Journal. Transdisziplinäre Studien zur Lehrerbildung, 8, S. 207-238. (**peer-review**)

Leonhard, T., & Rihm, T. (2011). Erhöhung der Reflexionskompetenz durch Begleitveranstaltungen zum Schulpraktikum? Konzeption und Ergebnisse eines Pilotprojekts mit Lehramtsstudierenden. Lehrerbildung auf dem Prüfstand, 4 (2), 240–270.

Peter, K. & Hecht, P. (2022). Vorwort. Erziehung & Unterricht(9-10), 661-667.

Worm, A. (2019). Fluchtmigration aus Syrien-Eine biographietheoretische und figurationssoziologische Studie. Universitätsverlag Göttingen.



Thank you!

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